

# **Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)**

## **Steering Committee Meeting**

March 9, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Resources Agency

### **Meeting Notes**

#### **Associated documents/handouts:**

- Agenda
- Relative Potential Benefits of Conceptual Conservation Strategies for Proposed Covered Fish Species (Working Draft Table)
- Preliminary Relative Assessment of Preliminary Conceptual Alternatives to Achieve Planning Agreement Goals and Objectives (Working Draft Table)
- Potential Relationship between Preliminary Conceptual Conservation Strategy Alternatives (CSA's) and Key Environmental Stressors affecting Covered Species (Working Draft Table)
- Comparison of Delta Configuration Requirements and Hydrological Conditions among the Preliminary Conceptual CSA's (Working Draft Table)
- Preliminary Conceptual CSA's (Working Draft Table, revised to incorporate new alternatives recommended at the 2/26/07 meeting)
- Potential Criteria for Screening Preliminary Conceptual CSA's
- Report from Membership Workgroup on Steering Committee application process

#### **Action Items and Key Decisions**

- Draft Covered Activities with descriptions will be complete by 3/20
- California Farm Bureau Federation, represented by Kenny Watkins, and Defenders of Wildlife, represented by Kim Delfino, were both accepted formally as members of BDCP Steering Committee (SC).
- All meeting notes through February 2007 were approved; future SC notes will include more detail on substance of discussions and points of agreement and disagreement among stakeholders.
- Science Workgroup will meet for the first time on 3/20 to discuss process for integrating science into BDCP.
- Consultants will produce a timeline for Conservation Strategy and Biological Goals and Objectives for 3/23 SC meeting

#### **Introductions and Updates**

Delta Vision is moving forward quickly; numerous meetings and hearings are occurring. Karen Scarborough will keep the SC updated and involved.

#### **Meeting Summary Approval**

All meeting summaries from 2006 and January 2007 were approved. Future meeting summaries for SC will include more detailed content on discussions, and will summarize key points of disagreement and consensus, based on the format of the CS Workgroup.

### **Membership Workgroup**

In February, the Membership Workgroup accepted applications, interviewed applicants, and recommended that both applicants be accepted as members of the Steering Committee. Today the Farm Bureau and Defenders of Wildlife were officially approved as SC members. At the request of the SC, the Workgroup produced a report of the application process. See also Action Items.

### **Science Workgroup**

Workgroup will be co-chaired by Ann Hayden and Brent Walthall, with coordination help from the Resources Agency. The first meeting will be on 3/20 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Resources Agency Bldg., Room 1131. Science Workgroup's charge is to ensure BDCP science process meets DFG requirements for NCCP. Workgroup will review the proposed process, discuss establishment of a Scientific Panel, review current work products, and discuss role of scientific review in BDCP. See also Action Items.

### **Conservation Strategy (CS) Workgroup: Update and Discussion**

CS Workgroup now meets every Monday at Resources Agency Bldg., Room 1131 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. The 3/12 meeting is cancelled; regular meetings will resume 3/19.

Today's presentation by the consultant (SAIC) and Co-chairs reviews the CS Workgroup's progress and recommendations to date. Handouts are the same as those presented at 3/5 CS meeting; content will change based on input from Steering Committee and CS Workgroup.

#### ***Presentation Key Points:***

CS Workgroup has met weekly since 2/9. For more details on meeting content see CS Workgroup Meeting Summaries, available on BDCP website.

#### ***Summary of CS Workgroup progress to date:***

- Reviewed definitions of terms, description of deliverables, process and schedule for developing the final Conservation Strategy.
- Seven Draft Conservation Strategy Alternatives (CSA's), including key elements, benefits, and constraints were developed by the consultants and discussed in depth by the Workgroup; two additional CSA's (dual and split conveyance) were added based on feedback from the Workgroup.
- Tables of comparisons of CSA's relative to Conservation Goals, Stressors, and Covered Species benefits were developed by the consultants and discussed in depth by the Workgroup.
- Draft potential Screening Criteria were developed by the consultant and discussed by the Workgroup.

#### ***Next steps (March-April):***

- Identify key conservation "themes" based on biological stressors and ecological processes that are critical to covered species (e.g., improve

habitat through fluctuating conditions, reduce mortality). These themes will further guide CSA design.

- Develop matrix of covered species and biological stressors, to be compiled by SAIC and subcontractor Hanson Inc., along with biologists from agencies, PRE's, and NGO's.
- Identify Screening Criteria to help select 2-4 CSA's, based on
  - Conservation Goals and objectives,
  - Planning Goals,
  - Scientific considerations,
  - Economic considerations/ cost comparison.
- Formation of process for independent science input and review through
  - Formation of science Workgroup 3/20,
  - Input from biologists to identify where science input necessary.

*Schedule for 2007:*

- March: finalize conservation themes, expand list of CSA's, develop Screening Criteria
- April: reduce list of CSA's to 2-4 based on Screening Criteria
- May: add detail to CSA descriptions, assess relative benefits and costs
- June: dovetail one or more CSA's with Covered Activities
- ⊖ November-December: develop Conservation Strategy Framework, which will **guide set out a** detailed conservation strategy. ~~with detailed Biological Goals and Objectives~~

*Draft Conservation Strategy Alternatives:*

See attached documents for detailed description. Each CSA description includes stressors, key elements, and constraints. We expect the tables to grow and change based on input from technical meetings and Committee (e.g. climate change).

1. Operations modification with existing conveyance
2. Habitat restoration, with in-Delta focus
3. Opportunistic exports with in-Delta habitat conservation
  - a. Water exports would occur during high-flow periods to allow more natural salinity fluctuation
  - b. Restoration would take advantage of fluctuating conditions
4. South Delta Aqueduct to bring water to mouth of San Joaquin river
  - a. Hydraulic barrier in South with fluctuation in rest of Delta
  - b. Restoration to take advantage of changed hydrology
5. Isolated Facility (Hood to pumps) and habitat restoration reconfiguration
6. Habitat restoration, with Suisun Marsh focus
7. Habitat restoration, with upstream focus
8. Bifurcated South Delta Aqueduct (isolation of pumps (CVP and SWP) to enhance flows out of San Joaquin River)
9. Dual-conveyance (isolated facility in combination with continued through-Delta conveyance)

### ***Summary of Discussion:***

Extensive discussion following the CS Workgroup presentation focused on the role of science in BDCP process. By its conclusion members were generally comfortable with the mechanisms by which science is integrated in BDCP. The four paths in which science is being integrated include: 1) topical science presentations at Steering Committee and Workgroup meetings, which have been occurring as appropriate since inception of BDCP; 2) collaboration between consultants and member-recommended biologists during development and review of work products; which will begin next week with technical sessions on species-specific impacts from Draft CSA elements and potential conservation actions; 3) Science Workgroup, which will review current process and make recommendations (see Science Workgroup); and 4) integration of pre-existing research, science, and policy analysis in the Bay Delta into work products and decision support tools (e.g., DRMS, DRERIP, CALFED, POD, PPIC).

Several stakeholders, including the NGO's and FWS suggested that independent science review should occur at pre-determined points in the BDCP process, as in the Reserve Design Process. Members also want to ensure that the quality and transparency of the legal and policy process is not jeopardized by strict adherence to the short schedule. K. Scarborough and the consultants responded that BDCP tries to balance efficiency with efficacy, and that it is a unique process for the several reasons: there is a 10-year history of scientific analysis and policy process in the Delta that can be used as background and content for BDCP; the timeline is short but internally flexible; and BDCP interacts with parallel planning processes. BDCP is therefore non-linear and iterative (e.g., Covered Activities and Species are still being determined, which typically occurs before a ~~CSA's~~ conservation strategy is developed).

Several members requested that each CSA include elements that will be recommended regardless of the final Conservation Strategy selected ("no-regrets" measures such as Suisun Bay restoration). Consultants responded that those elements would likely change in scale or level of certainty depending on the scope and content of the final Conservation Strategy. K. Scarborough recommended keeping track of those measures and activities and re-integrating them later in the process.

The SC reviewed handouts with the understanding that substantially more information is already being added to them for the next CS Workgroup meeting based on CS Workgroup recommendations and biologists' input. Stressors will be expanded (e.g., sources of mortality, climate change) and species- and life-stage-specific science integrated further. Themes will be further developed based on stressors.

### **Public Comments**

**Serge Birk. Central Valley Water Project Association.** Noted that stressors vary among species and life-stages especially for pelagic species. They suggest beginning to incorporate this variability and specificity into the BDCP work products now.

**Jerry Brown. Contra Costa Water.** They support including no-regrets options, but agree it might be best to add them later in the process. They believe that water quality should be getting more credence than it is currently getting in BDCP.

**Jonas Minton. Planning and Conservation League.** Suggests that as Committee compares alternatives they use themes and identify quantity and timing of exports, since that will influence rank of alternatives. Some of the alternatives could take decades to implement, so PCL wants to be sure that the annual water exports assurance process is not the only water management process during that interim period.

**Next Meeting**

Friday 3/23/07, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., same location.